

# Effectiveness of Transformational Leadership Style in Secondary Schools in Nigeria

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## Abstract

Education is the engine of national growth. A population of well educated citizens increases national economic competitiveness. To survive and develop in any nation, the education industry must grow. Secondary schools in Nigeria are headed by Principal. They are regarded as the Chief Executive of the school and are held accountable for all that happens. Hence, it is important to look at the leadership style-Transformational Leadership Style which may have a positive impact on the education sector. The concept of transformation leadership was initially introduced by leadership expert and presidential biographer-James MacGregor Burns (1978) who said that transformation leaders can be seen when “leaders and followers make each other to advance to a higher level of moral and motivation”. Transforming approach creates significant change in the life of people and organizations. It redesigns perceptions and values, and changes expectations and aspirations of followers. The fundamental idea in this theory is ‘change’ and the commitment of leadership in ensuring the implementation of organizational transformation, through transforming individuals in the organization. This study examined empirically the perceived knowledge and practice of transformation leadership of principal in Secondary Schools in Nigeria. The sample consists of 50 principals and 400 teachers. These were chosen by stratified and simple random sampling method from 50 schools across the six-geo-political zones of Nigeria (North-Central; North-East, North-West, South-West, South-South and South-East), 8 respondents were randomly drawn from each school while Principal of such schools automatically became a respondent. The ex-post facto research design was employed in the study. Five research questions and hypotheses were formulated to guide the study (investigation via questionnaire) entitled, “Transformation Leadership in Secondary Education” (TLISE). ‘TLISE’ has a five-point Likert type rating scale and this was validated by experts in research method and statistics. The reliability coefficient was computed to be .81. The data collected were analysed through the application of t-test for different between Means and Pearson Product moment correlation, four out of the five hypotheses were accepted while one was rejected. The result revealed that both principal and teachers are aware of transformation leadership styles, however it was doubtful if the practical aspect of transforming the followers and students are realized. Based on the findings, recommendations were made to include: Principals must act as agent of positive change by creating a caring and trustful atmosphere; enhance team spirit; involve teachers in planning and making teaching materials.

**Keywords:** effectiveness, transformational leadership style, secondary schools

## 1. Introduction

Traditionally, especially in developing nations, the teacher’s day centers around their classroom, one room, a chalkboard, one big desk and between twenty and fifty smaller desks. In the traditional school system, one person leads, the others follow, one person makes the major decisions that affect the entire group. Input may be asked for or given, but the decision itself is left up to one individual and in most cases, this one person in the case of secondary schools, is always the Principal. The Principal oversees all the teachers and is the person to whom they all answer to. He /she is responsible for administration of both human, physical resources and finances of the school, the teachers are answerable to the principal. When administrators establish a hierarchical form of authority as they do in the traditional model, they are communicating to the teachers the assumption that they are subordinates who do not share the same goals as the administration and must be monitored in order to force them to be productive. The implication of this message on teachers is that they have no initiative and their input is insignificant. The system directly and indirectly tells them they don’t know anything. Maybe, that is one of the major reasons why in developing nation, such as, Nigeria, there is high rate of attrition of teachers. A survey confirms that not more than 50% of women and only 30% of men are still teaching six years after they begin (Farber, 1991). The traditional leadership style cannot stimulate followers into productivity and therefore national development is impended, hence, there is need to accommodate transformational leadership style in the education industry.

Transformation leaders are those who stimulate and inspire followers to both achieve extra ordinary outcomes and in the process develop their own leadership capacity. Transformational leadership is a style of leadership that involves a change. Change just cannot happen in school or nation but it happens with people, so, in order to lead change you have to know how to lead people. Through the strength of their vision and personality, transformational leaders are able to inspire followers to change expectations, perceptions and motivations to work towards common goals. The major premise of the transformational leadership theory is the

leader's ability to motivate the followers to accomplish more than what the followers planned to accomplish. (Krishnan, 2005).

Transformation leadership has four components which are; idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration (Bass, 1985).

Idealized influence and inspirational motivation according to Dionne, Yammarino, Alwater and Spangler (2004) are connected with the leader's ability to formulate and articulate a shared vision. The idealized influence of transformational leader serves as a role model for followers and because followers trust and respect the leader, they emulate this individual and internalize his or her ideas. Intellectual stimulation of transformational leadership is exhibited through recognition of followers' stimulation, creativity and innovation while under individual consideration, the leader provide a supportive climate in which they listen carefully to the individual needs of the followers.

According to Bass and Avolio (1990), transformation 'leaders augment followers' Power to think on their own, develop fresh ideas, and question operating rules that are archaic. Avolio and Gibbons (1988) stated that, a major goal of transformational leadership is to develop followers' self management and self-development. Conger and Kanungo (1988), asserted that, this leadership is also connected to empowerment through self-efficacy. It is however, doubtful, if Nigeria educational sector has been able to internalize transformational leadership style in the secondary school organization. Hence, the researchers are interested in finding out the extent to which principal embrace, accept and practice transformational leadership styles in their various schools.

## 1.2 Statement of the Problem

Transformational leaders work to bring about human and economic transformation. Several studies have revealed that there is important connection between transformational leadership and organizational operation. It is therefore imperative that school organization should be specifically looked into to confirm if principals have knowledge of this style of leadership in secondary schools and to also find out the extend of utilization. The question to be answered in this research work is; Do principals have knowledge of transformational leadership style? What are the level of utilization of transformation skills in school organization?

## 2. Purpose of the Study

The purposes of the study are:

- i. To find out if Principals have knowledge and understand the concept of transformational leadership style;
- ii. To confirm if there is any relationship between transformation leadership style of Principal and positive change in the school organization.
- iii. To find out if Principal and Teachers differs in their opinion concerning the knowledge and usage of Transformation leadership.

## 1.3 Research Questions

The study is guided by the following research questions:

- i. Does the Principal perception of transformational leadership style differs from that of teachers?
- ii. Do Principal and Teachers differ in their opinion towards idealized attributes?
- iii. Is there any difference between Principal and Teachers in their opinion on intellectual stimulation of Principals?
- iv. Is there any difference between the Principal and Teachers on the issue of inspiration motivation of Principal?
- v. Does the transformation leadership style of Principal affect the School organization?

## 1.4 Hypothesis

The following hypotheses were formulated for the study:

HO<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference between Principal self appraisal and Teachers' perceived opinion on the knowledge of the concept of 'transformational leadership style'.

HO<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference between Principal and Teachers perception towards idealized attributes for a positive change in a teaching/learning situation.

HO<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant difference between Principal and Teachers opinion concerning intellectual stimulation of Principals.

HO<sub>4</sub>: There is no significant difference between Principal and Teachers on the issue of inspirational motivation of Principal.

HO<sub>5</sub>: The transformational leadership style of Principal does not significantly transform Teachers in School organization.

## 2 Method of Study

The descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The population consisted of 450 respondents (50 Principals and 400 Teachers) from 50 Secondary Schools in all the six geo-political zones of Nigeria. The stratified and simple random sampling method was used to get eight teachers from each school and the Principal of sampled schools automatically was used as a respondent. The instrument used for this study was the questionnaire titled 'Transformation Leadership in Secondary Education' (TLISE) constructed by the researchers. The researchers also adopted the Leadership Questionnaire developed by Bass (1985) but with little adjustment. 'TLISE' has five points Likert rating. The 'TLISE' was validated by experts and found to have both face and content validity. Reliability co-efficient was computed to be .81 using split-half statistics.

The data collected were analysed using T-test for independent variable for hypotheses 1-4 and Pearson moment correlation for hypothesis 5.

## 3 Results

The results of the study are presented in table 1-5.

HO<sub>1</sub>: There is no significant difference between principal self-appraisal and teachers' perceived opinion on the knowledge of the concept of transformational leadership style.

Table 1: 't-test' Analysis on principal self-appraisal and Teachers Opinion on Knowledge of Transformation Leadership style.

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	Sd	Df	Calculated T-Value	Critical T-Value	Decision
Principal	50	64.74	19.11	448	1.397	1.97	Accept Null
Teachers	400	60.53	20.22				

The table above shows that cal 't' value of 1.397 is not significant as the t-critical of 1.97 is higher at 0.05 Alpha levels. Thus, the Null Hypothesis is accepted. The result indicates that there is no significant difference between Principal and Teachers opinion on the knowledge of the concept of Transformational Leadership style.

HO<sub>2</sub>: There is no significant difference between Principal and Teachers perception towards idealized attributes for a positive change in a teaching/learning situation.

Table 2: 't-test' comparison of Principal and Teachers with regard to idealized attributes as a weapon for positive change.

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	Sd	Df	Calculated T-Value	Critical T-Value	Decision
Principal	50	74.96	19.22	448	0.672	1.97	Accept Null
Teachers	400	72.56	24.30				

The result shows that the calculated 't' value of 0.672 is not significant as the 't' critical of 1.97 is higher than the calculated 't', the Null Hypothesis is therefore accepted.

HO<sub>3</sub>: There is no significant difference between Principals and Teachers opinion concerning intellectual stimulation of Principals.

Table 3: 't-test' on intellectual stimulation of Principal as perceived by Principal and Teachers.

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	SD	DF	Calculated t-value	Critical T-Value	Decision
Principal	50	64.81	17.67	448	1.96	1.97	Accept Null
Teachers	400	58.89	20.59				

From the table, it was revealed that calculated 'T-value' of 1.96 is not significant as the 't'-test tabulated value of 1.97 is higher at 0.05 Alpha levels, thus, the Null Hypothesis is accepted. The implication is that, there is no significant difference between Principal and Teachers perceived opinion on the effect of intellectual stimulation on teachers.

HO<sub>4</sub>: There is no significant difference between Principals and Teachers on the issue of inspirational motivation of Principal.

Table 4: 't-test' on Principal and Teachers opinion on effect of inspirational motivation.

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	Sd	Df	Calculated T-Value	Critical T-Value	Decision
Principal	50	70.80	20.19	448	3.344	1.97	Reject Null
Teachers	400	59.96	21.77				

Data on table 4 revealed that the calculated value of 3.344 is significant as the t-critical value of 1.97 is less at 0.05 Alpha levels. Thus the Null Hypothesis is rejected. The implication is that there is significant difference in the opinion of Principal and Teachers on matter concerning inspirational motivation of Principal on Teachers.

HO<sub>5</sub>: The transformational Leadership style of Principal does not significantly transform teachers in school organization.

Table 5: Pearson Product moment correlation on relationship between transformational leadership style and teachers in school organization.

Variable	N	$\bar{X}$	Sd	Df	Calculated T-Value	Critical T-Value	Decision
Principal	50	64.06	20.81	448	0.061	0.088	Accept Null
Teachers	400	59.96	21.77				

From the above table, the calculated r-value (0.061) is less than the critical r-value (0.088). Therefore, Null Hypothesis is accepted. This implies that there is no significant relationship between the transformational leadership style of Principal and positive changes in school organization. It means that the principal transformational ideology did not help to transform the teachers.

#### 4 Discussion

From the findings, it was very obvious that both principal and teachers have good knowledge of the concept of 'Transformational Leadership'. The apparently closeness in this mean rating of the respondents portrayed that they did not actually deviate very much in their opinion of the existence and knowledge of this style of leadership.

The principal and teachers did not also deviate in their opinion that idealized attributes and intellectual stimulation act as agent of positive change. They however disagreed on their opinion on the issue of effect of inspirational motivation of principal on school organization. There was a significant difference in their view.

One major discovery from the findings is that the transformational leadership style of principal does not significantly transform teachers in school organization. Though the margin is narrow but the discovery is alarming. This is because most of the characteristics relating to transformational leadership were acknowledged by both principal/teachers as agent of change that could transform organization. If so, what went wrong?. This discovery is contrary to assumption and earlier discovery by scholars. Research studies have repeatedly shown that transformational leadership is positively connected to personal outcomes (Dumdum, Lowe and Avollo, 2002; Fuller, Patterson, Hester and Stringer, 1996). The relationship between transformational leadership and personal outcomes such as commitment and job satisfaction is well established. Bass (1985) argued that transformation leaders encourage followers to think critically and look for new approaches to do their jobs. Bass and Avollo(1990), also stated that, transformation leaders augment followers powers to think on their own, develop fresh ideas, and question operating rules that are archaic.

Dvir, Eden, Avolio and Shamir (2002) in their work also discovered that Transformational Leaders had a direct impact on followers empowerment, morality and motivation. Researchers also found out that transformation leadership can have a positive effect on the group. Research evidence clearly shows that groups led by Transformation Leaders have higher levels of performance and satisfaction than groups led by other types of leaders (Ronald, E.J Riggio in an article appearing on the psychology today website). The reason, he said is that such leaders believed that their followers can do their best leading members of the group to feel inspired and empowered.

In order to find out reason for the outcome of the research, the researchers decided on an interactive session with principals and teachers; some of the discoveries are listed below:

- i. Principals feel they are the most important individuals in the organization, hence there is no need for consultations;
- ii. Majority of the principals do not believe the teachers are capable of power to think on their own, they do not trust followers' judgement.
- iii. Principal believe passion, humour and empathy may dilute their authority in the eye of the teachers. To majority of the principal, sharing power and decision-making reflect their own weaknesses. They see soliciting the input of others as a sign of admitting their own incompetencies.
- iv. Principal sees the daily administrative budgeting and managing conflicts as top priorities, staff training and strategic planning as of secondary concerns.
- v. Some teachers also complained about principal with emotional problem. Put in a question form, the teachers asked researchers, would you want to follow someone who has anger management problem?
- vi. Principal also complained that majority of teachers that have spent between 15-20 yrs in the profession are very unwilling to be transformed. They asked researchers, 'what happens if teachers do not want to be transformed and people are happy as they are?'. Human quickly form habits, unfortunately, once a habit forms, it is difficult to modify even when the new behavior is clearly better than the old. This was the case with such group of conservative teachers.

To survive, school organizations must grow and adapt, they must continually try out and adapt new ideas and that is why they need a committed leader to transform ideas. From all indications, both principal and teachers do

not help each other to grow despite the fact that they are aware of the importance of this leadership style.

## 5 Recommendations

The key to school improvement and development is the willingness and ability of principals to assume the role of staff development and act as agent of positive change. The following recommendations were made based on the findings of the study.

- i. Leaders to provide teachers with sense of school vision and mission;
- ii. Create a caring and trustful atmosphere;
- iii. Identify and promote shared values;
- iv. Encourage experimentation in methods of instructions;
- v. Encourage professional growth and development;
- vi. Fair work load and distributions;
- vii. Encourage free flow of communication, so that followers feel free to share ideas;
- viii. Provide conducive environment for effective teaching/learning;
- ix. Show respect for teachers/staff by treating them as professionals.
- x. Be a role model of integrity and fairness.
- xi. Augment followers' power to think on their own, and develop fresh ideas.
- xii. Principal must be committed to transform and teachers must be willing to be part of the 'new positive change'

## 6 Conclusion

A broad and longstanding consensus in Leadership theory holds that leaders in all walks of life and all kinds of organizations, public and private need to depend on others to accomplish the group purpose and need to encourage the development of leadership across the organization; schools are no different. The more willing principals are to spread leadership around, the better for the teachers. Maxwell (2011), asserted that the single biggest way to impact an organization is to focus on Transformational Leadership. There is almost no limit to the potential of an organization that recruits people, raises them up as leaders and continually develop them. Leadership requires the principal to accept and promote teachers competence by providing teachers with opportunity to lead. This is a shift from the traditional hierarchical model in matters relating to teaching and learning. Such increase in confidence and valence of outcomes can produce a noticeable rise in followers' efforts to succeed, thus, making leadership the stimulus to effort beyond expectations.

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